842 The Thonga child is always received into this world with great joy by the whole family. If it is a girl, it means oxen to buy a wife for one of the sons later on ; therefore it means increase not only in the wealth but in the number of the members of the family. If it is a boy, there is no direct material enrichment, but the clan has been strengthened and the name of the father is glorified and perpetuated. In the case of the birth of a first-born child (ñwana wa matibula), a special ceremony is performed at the end of the first week. When the grandmother has smeared the hut, she goes home, summons all the female relatives, sometimes as many as ten or fifteen ; they take with them food, ochre and fat prepared for this purpose. Two or three men accompany them. They enter the village of the child executing a special dance called *khana*, and singing the following song (which is the proper song to glorify a first-born) :

I celebrate my pot which has done *ngelebendje*...

They compare the child with a pot of clay which has gone through the firing process. It has been tried as one always tries a pot by letting it fall to the ground ; but it is not shattered, because it has not cracked in the furnace, it has kept intact ! This is what is meant by the descriptive adverb ngelebendje.

846 Then they smear the baby, the mother, the father, everybody 851 in the village with ochre. It is a great feast. A goat will be 603 killed, if possible, because the father and mother have "found a village" (kuma muti) by the child, they have "grown roots" (mila mitju). This is law, but its omission is not taboo. When the grandparents do not perform this ceremony, it is an insult to the parents of the child, but no evil consequence will follow.

755 is a meteorite ground to fine powder. It is interesting to compare this use of the
753 meteorite with the fact that, amongst the Thongas, this fumigation is intended to prevent
821 convulsions. Convulsions, as we shall see (Part VI. Chap. II. B) are caused by the mysterious power of Heaven. The meteorite has fallen from Heaven. Thus the baptism of smoke aims at bringing the child under the influence of the two main elements of Bantu religion : the ancestor gods and Heaven.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga



846 For any subsequent children, the feast will be reduced to the
851 presentation by the grandmother of a basket of food to "*tlangela*
603 *ñwana*," viz. to "celebrate the child."

## III. *The Nursing Period.*

853 The little child has been taken out of the confinement hut (*humesha busahanen*). He is now allowed to go outside. The nursing period then begins and will last two and a half or three years; but before we study the rites which mark it, let us consider the manner in which the baby is carried and his diet during this period.

### 1) The Ntehe.

854 A little child is not carried by his mother in her arms, but in a softened skin which is called *ntehe*. The preparation of the ntehe is subject to many prescribed customs.

The first of these is this: the *ntehe* must not be looked out before the birth of the child, or it would bring misfortune. This is a taboo which I might call a "taboo of prevision." Some other taboos of this kind are met with in our tribe.

[604] For a first-born child, the skin must be provided by the maternal uncle. This is a rule, but the custom is not tabooed (1). The father may also prepare it, if necessary.

A South-African woman with her child in the ntehe.

825 The ntehe must not be a sheep skin.
854. That is taboo. Let them take the skin of a duiker (blue antelope), of a goat or of a nhala (impala). Sheep skins are

(1) Though the term taboo generally means a prohibition, I take the liberty of using it in a positive sense: A custom is taboo or is tabooed when its transgression is a taboo.

## 5) The tying of the cotton string.

854 When the child "tiyelanyana" viz. "becomes a little firm,"
857 the mother, having to plough her fields and to cook the food, begins to seat him on the sandy soil, after having made a kind of hole of about five inches in depth. We have seen Thonga babies already sitting at the age of two months. But this "dumping" hardly meets all the requirements, and the mother looks for a girl to help her to take care of the baby (wa ku tlanga na ye, to play with him). She puts the child in the charge of an elder sister or a cousin ; a girl of five to ten is quite strong enough for the purpose. I have often admired the patience of these miniature nurses, sometimes not very much bigger than the child they carry, with their very troublesome babies.

852 But very soon the child begins to crawl (kasa) and this is the
115 time when a very striking rite is performed. This rite seems to be practised all over the tribe, but it has more importance in the Northern clans than amongst the Ba-Ronga. I shall here give the description of Viguet, who belonged to the Tsungu clan and had emigrated to the Spelonken. My readers must forgive me if I cannot tell the story with all its details and if I am obliged to write some of them in Latin (1).

851 These are the ipsissima verba of my informant : "This is a
833 great law amongst the Thongas. When a child begins to crawl,
766 even before, the *puri* is tied round his waist. The *puri* is a
842 cotton (2) string. Father and mother fix the day ; if they forget to do so, their parents, (the grandparents) will remind them of the law. They must have sexual intercourse, but in such a way that the mother will not become pregnant, s. n. i. (Annotatio 2)[1]. The mother will have to take in her hands "their filth" (thyaka ra bona) smear the string with it and tie it round the child. It will

(1) A more complete description of this rite and of some others related to the taboos of the Thongas will be found in the Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie. Oct. 1910. Paris.

(2) These are plants of cotton probably subspontaneous in the Low Country of the Transvaal of Delagoa Bay.

1 [See p. 616 in these categories or in 116.--Analyst]

851 766 833 remain there till it falls to pieces. After this operation the child is "grown up" and three things are allowed which were taboo before :

1) The child, if he dies, can be buried on the hill, in dry soil. Before the *boha puri* he would have been buried in wet soil, near the river, as is customary with twins and children who have cut their upper teeth first.

2) He can participate in the strange purification called *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place after the death of one of the inhabitants of the village (See ceremonies of death).

852 766 839 821 842 3) The parents can again have conjugal intercourse, though they must avoid conception till the child is weaned. Before this ceremony it was absolutely prohibited, and should they have sinned in this respect and the mother have conceived, they would be very guilty! It is a dangerous taboo! They would have "stolen" the child, stolen it from the law (yiba nawen). The child would not have "entered the law." It would be useless to tie the string round him in order to repair the evil done. Should he live long, should he even become an old man, he will have to be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain would be prevented from falling.

Amongst the Malulekes and the Hlengwes such children are even burnt after their death. We shall speak later on about the mysterious relation established by the Thongas between these children, their burial, and the rain.

852 854 Amongst the Ba-Ronga this rite is called *boha nshale* (to tie the cotton) and can be performed in the same way or even more simply by the father (Annotatio 3).[2] Parents, when they have duly tied the string on the little one, are said to have *fuya nwana*, viz. taken possession of the child.

Amongst them again, another thing is then allowed which was taboo before. The child can be carried on the shoulders without ntehe by the arms alone (hi minkono).

851 It is clear that the tying of the cotton string means the official reception of the child into the family, even into human society. Before that, he was hardly considered as a human being, he was *shilo* (a thing), *khuna* (an incomplete being). Now he is *nkulu*,

2 [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116 - Analyst]

851 a grown up child (1). The expression *fuya ñwana* confirms our explanation. This custom is not a protective rite : the physician has nothing to do with it ; it is really an act by which the new-born child becomes a regular member of the community. The strict prohibition of renewed conception before this rite has been accomplished is evidently dictated by the feeling that another child must not appear before this one has been duly received into the family.

### 6) The weaning.

862 856 A whole year, even more, will elapse after the *boha puri* before the little one can be weaned. He will learn to speak and to walk, and it is only when his intelligence is sufficiently developed to allow him to run small errands that the date of the weaning will be fixed. When his parents can send him to the next hut to ask for snuff and see him coming back holding the tobacco, they say : "Now the time has come !"

The rite of weaning is accomplished in the following manner in Nondwane. (Mboza).

862 824 First of all, the father looks for a young *ntjopfa* tree which has only one root. The ntjopfa is an anonacea bush, which colonists sometimes call the wild custard. (Its fruit is very much like custard fruit and it is said that the true cultivated custard can be grafted on it). The root of this tree is said to have the property of making people forget. The mother cooks a pot of Kafir corn in which she has put the medicine. This 862 will help the child to forget the breast. But the great act is the 782 *hondlola* which takes place under the direction of the physician. 755 The mother pounds some mealies, pours water on them and adds some leaven ; in this way she makes a little light beer (buputju). She keeps a little of the bran of the pounded mealies. The doctor comes, kills a chicken and sprinkles this bran with the blood and *hahla*, viz. offers a regular sacrifice. He prays to the spirits of his own family and asks those of the child's family to

(1) This word *khana* is also employed to designate boys who have not yet gone through the circumcision school. *Bukhana* is the despicable state of uncircumcision. The state of a child before the ceremony of *boha puri* is another kind of bukhana.

we shall discuss it in Part VI the origin of this extraordinary idea. A woman who has had a miscarriage is impure for three months at least. Menstruation must have taken place two or three times and have cleansed her before her husband can have any sexual relation with her. (Compare Annotatio 7,[1] which applies to the transgression of this rule.)

## 7) Parturition.

We have described, when treating of birth, the many taboos which accompany parturition. The *busahana* period, from the moment of delivery till the fall of the umbilical cord, is very much dreaded. When a woman is suffering from *shilumi* (a disease which sometimes follows delivery, probably owing to a displacement of the organs) she must not enter the hut of a woman who has been confined. The ailment would "jump over to her" (tlulela). There is however a way of preventing contagion. The visitor must take the piece of clothing which she uses as a girdle and throw it to the patient, and the patient throws back her own girdle to the visitor. Then she can enter : "They have acted according to the law, there is no more *yila*."

A mother must not drink any milk from the birth of the child until its presentation to the moon. Afterwards she is allowed to drink only milk from cows which have calved many times.

The rite of *kunga* is performed in the case of a first-born child. This child is called *nwana wa matibula*, the child by which the woman has *tibula*, viz. has become a mother. The etymology of this word *tibula* (Zulu zibula) is not known. When people come to greet the baby, its parents will not allow them to take it in their arms. They must pay something for permission to do so, even a brother, a sister, or a grandmother. The father is not subject to this rule ; "the child is his, belongs to him." Nowadays this ceremony means only that these people are happy to receive the new born child amongst them. There is no taboo in it. But it is certainly related to the fact that in giving birth to a child for the first time, the woman has passed from womanhood to motherhood.

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in 116 - Ans/ed]

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841 A demonstration of joy takes place at the birth of any subsequent
837 child, but the kunga is only performed for the first-born. It does not seem that in the case of the first-born child, as in the case of bowumba (see p. 125) the gifts of kunga are subject to any taboo.

### 8) Loss of children.

766 A woman who loses an infant (wa ku felwa) is deeply contam-
783 inated with the defilement of death. She must bury it herself
834 without aid from her husband. Next day, she goes behind the
853 hut, kneels down and draws off her own milk on to the ground. She does this until the secretion has ceased. This is taboo ; her milk is polluted ; no drop of it must fall in the gardens. She must
864 avoid crossing the fields and going to the storehouses to fetch food. Until she has been "put right again (busetela)," she eats with a spoon. To use a spoon is a bad omen for a woman, because it reminds her of death. That is the reason why men adopt this civilized custom more readily than women. During her mourning, no sexual relations are allowed. When menstruation begins again, she first keeps silent, and does not tell her husband. Only on the second or third occasion does she inform him of the fact. He can then purify her ; this is done in the same way as in the case of widows. (See p. 154.) Then he buys new clothing for her and she resumes her ordinary mode of life. Everybody seeing her with this new attire will know that "she has been repaired." Should any one else than the husband give her this clothing, the latter will be greatly offended and accuse her of having relations with a lover.

765 A man does not put on *malopa*, mourning clothing, for a child
586 who was not yet of age. The woman alone does so. However a husband is always grieved at the death of his child and a sad event like this often leads to dreadful results. He will begin to think that his wife is a witch and has eaten her own child by her magical powers. Such an accusation is almost sure to end in a divorce.

A woman who has *lost many children*, three or four, is considered

Latin Notes for Medical Men and Ethnographers

291 "Annotatio prima (P. 40). --'Shifado' quo quisque Thonga
845 extremum penem vestit, spheroides excavataque res est;
848 quod tegimentum ex iis, quae ad pudorem et munditiem perti-
881 nent, postulatur. Si quis schifado suum amisit, ei dedecoriest."

Note 1 (page 40). Shifado, with which every Thonga covers the end of his penis, is a spherical and hollowed-out object; this covering is demanded from those who are concerned with decency and cleanliness. If anyone has lost his schifado [sic] he is disgraced.

"Olim apud Thonga, qui a populo Zulo illum morem acceperunt, viri, quod linguâ 'mbayi' id est fistulam quandam ex foliis textis palmae quae 'milala' dicitur, ferre solebant.

[At one time among the Thonga, who took over this custom from the Zulu people, the men used to wear what in their language is called mbayi, that is, some kind of tube made of palm leaves woven together which is called milala.]

"Ultima 'mbayi' anno 1895 vel 1896 post Christum natum visa sunt. Quod shifado ex parvae cucurbitae cortice aut duro et excavato accurateque polito ligno factum, summo veretro affixum, minime incommode ferre videntur."

[The last mbayi were seen in the year 1895 or 1896. Because the shifado is made of the rind of a small gourd or of hard, hollowed-out and carefully polished wood, and attached at the top of the private parts, it seems that it can be worn with the minimum of discomfort.]

833 "Annotatio secunda (P. 56). S. n. i, sc. semine non im-
851 misso. Ad hoc, marito sperma foras spargendum est (a nga
842 mu weleri): hic est coitus rite factus et quasi lustralis. Inde,
765 uxor in manus utriusque sordes (thyaka ra bona) sumit, qui-
783 bus umbilicum illinit."

[Note 2 (page 56). S. n. i., that is, the semen has not been injected. Moreover the husband must eject his sperms outside of the body (a nga mu weleri): this is the coitus properly executed and, as it were, lustral. Then the wife takes in her hands the filth of both (thyaka ra bona) and smears the navel with it.]

"Annotatio tertia (P. 57). Corpus infimum pueri ex adverso et a tergo peni pater tangit.

[Note 3 (page 57). The father touches with his penis the lowest part of the boy's body from the front and from behind.]

831 "Annotatio quarta (P. 88). Hae sunt formulae:
881 Shana khololwane ma ri tiba le'ri onhaka milebe?
Novistisne avem quae labra minora laedit?

marginal period during which the maphisa must use protective medicines against the dangers of the bush, and keep certain rules. 224 784

As a protection they carry their charms, especially the *ndjao*, the root of a certain juncus which is used on many other occasions. As regards the taboos which they must observe, I will first mention those applying to travellers in general, especially the *salt taboo* (I. p. 339). Should they take salt with them, this would "precede them" (rangela), and they would kill no game. It will be soon enough to look for salt when they have killed. But the great taboo of these hunting trips is the *sexual taboo*. This was already imposed before starting and it must be observed Phroughout the expedition. The necessity of avoiding anything connected with sexual relations is so great that maphisa will take with them to cook their food little boys under marriageable age. What is the reason of this prohibition? I have explained it in dealing with the Thonga idea of sexual relations (I. p. 189). If the hunters transgress the law, the big animals will be so wild that it will be impossible to approach them ; they will furiously attack the men who have sinned, because they know them, and woe upon them! So much so that if the hunters see an elephant or a hippopotamus in obstinate pursuit of one of their number, they will begin to insult him for having spoilt the whole trip by his misbehaviour, and send him home. 224 784 834 825

The law of continence is also binding on *the hunters' wives* at home. It is true that when the absence of their husbands is prolonged for a very long time they may become unfaithful to them and the men, on their return, will find babies waiting for them which are not their true children. This will cause them no unhappiness, as these babies none the less belong to them, their wives having been duly bought, and the time for fear is now passed, as they have returned home safely. The fact that these men welcome the children born during their absence caused me to think that hunters' wives were not subject to the sexual taboo as their husbands are. But further inquiry has shown that this is not true. Old Makhani assured me that incontinence on the part of the wife at home would have as a consequence that the husband would be attacked and killed by wild beasts far away in the desert. 224 784 837 851 752